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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a speech signal comprising:
extracting prosodic features from a speech signal;
modeling the prosodic features to identify at least one speech endpoint;
producing an endpoint signal corresponding to the occurrence of the at least one speech endpoint; and
providing the endpoint signal and the speech signal to a speech processing recognition application to facilitate subsequent processing recognition of the speech signal.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the extracting step comprises:
processing pitch information within the speech signal.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the extracting step further comprises:
determining a duration pattern; and
performing pause analysis.
4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the processing step comprises:
generating a pitch contour;
producing a pitch movement model from the pitch contour; and
extracting at least one pitch parameter from the pitch movement model.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the at least one pitch parameter is a pitch movement slope.
6. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the at least one pitch parameter is a

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difference between the pitch information in the speech signal and baseline pitch information.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the producing step comprises generating a posterior probability regarding the at least one speech endpoint.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the posterior probability regarding a plurality of speaker states including a probability that a speaker has completed an utterance, a probability that the speaker is pausing due to hesitation, or a probability that the speaker is talking fluently.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 where the posterior probability is continuously updated as the speech signal is processed.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
executing a speech recognition routine for processing the speech signal using the at least one speech endpoint.

11. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for processing a speech signal comprising:
a prosodic feature extractor for extracting prosodic features from the speech signal;
a prosodic feature analyzer for modeling the prosodic features to identify at least one speech endpoint;
an endpoint signal producer that produces an endpoint signal corresponding to the occurrence of the at least one speech endpoint; and
means for providing the endpoint signal and the speech signal to a speech processing recognition application to facilitate subsequent processing recognition of the speech signal.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the prosodic feature extractor comprises:

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a pitch processor for processing pitch information within the speech signal.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the prosodic feature extractor further comprises:

means for determining a duration pattern; and

means for performing pause analysis

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the pitch processor comprises:

means for generating a pitch contour;

means for producing a pitch movement model from the pitch contour; and

means for extracting at least one pitch parameter from the pitch movement model.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the at least one pitch parameter is a pitch movement slope.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the at least one pitch parameter is a difference between the pitch information in the speech signal and baseline pitch information.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the endpoint signal producer comprises a posterior probability generator for generating a posterior probability regarding the at least one speech endpoint.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the posterior probability regarding a plurality of speaker states includes a probability that a speaker has completed an utterance, a probability that the speaker is pausing due to hesitation, or a probability that the speaker is talking fluently.

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18 where the posterior probability is continuously updated as the speech signal is processed.

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20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising:
a computer for executing a speech recognition routine for processing the speech signal using the at least one speech endpoint.
21. (Currently Amended) An electronic storage medium for storing a program that, when executed by a processor, causes a system to perform a method for processing a speech signal comprising:
extracting prosodic features from a speech signal;
modeling the prosodic features to identify at least one speech endpoint;
producing an endpoint signal corresponding to the occurrence of the at least one speech endpoint; and
providing the endpoint signal and the speech signal to a speech processing recognition application to facilitate subsequent processing recognition of the speech signal.
22. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a speech signal comprising:
extracting prosodic features from a speech signal by processing pitch information within the speech signal;
modeling the prosodic features to identify at least one speech endpoint;
producing an endpoint signal corresponding to the occurrence of the at least one speech endpoint; and
providing the endpoint signal and the speech signal to a speech processing application to facilitate subsequent processing of the speech signal.
23. (Previously Presented) Apparatus for processing a speech signal comprising:
a prosodic feature extractor for extracting prosodic features from the speech signal by processing pitch information within the speech signal;
a prosodic feature analyzer for modeling the prosodic features to identify at least one speech endpoint;
an endpoint signal producer that produces an endpoint signal corresponding to

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the occurrence of the at least one speech endpoint; and

means for providing the endpoint signal and the speech signal to a speech processing application to facilitate subsequent processing of the speech signal.

24. (Previously Presented) An electronic storage medium for storing a program that, when executed by a processor, causes a system to perform a method for processing a speech signal comprising:

extracting prosodic features from a speech signal by processing pitch information within the speech signal;

modeling the prosodic features to identify at least one speech endpoint;

producing an endpoint signal corresponding to the occurrence of the at least one speech endpoint; and

providing the endpoint signal and the speech signal to a speech processing application to facilitate subsequent processing of the speech signal.